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“Analysing Constraints to Participation in Snowsports for Pre-service Teachers: A Qualitative Study of Tourism for Alpine (Downhill) Skiing”

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Abstract

Leisure constraint research has been prominent within the leisure field since the mid 1960s. Constraints to participation are generally categorised as intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural. Previous research has addressed snowsports (e.g., skiing and snow boarding) in limited ways. This study is concerned with Physical Education students as tourists and the implications of their experiences of taking students on ski courses (often overseas) in their subsequent careers as PE teachers. The current study involved interviewing (n=36) students training to teach Physical Education within a UK higher education institution. Participants were grouped by sex and whether or not they had previously participated in snowsports. Interviews were analysed for both deductive themes (from the above mentioned three categories) and inductive themes. Findings suggest that issues concerning “time”, “hassle”, and “anticipation of expense” were of little relevance while interpersonal issues were the main consideration. Implications for snowsport development and encouragement are discussed and suggestions for further research made.

Keywords: Education; leisure constraints; participation; skiing; teacher; winter sports tourism

Paper Type: Scientific study

Introduction

Leisure constraints can be thought of as “factors that are assumed by researchers and/or perceived or experienced by individuals to limit the formation of leisure preferences and/or to inhibit or prohibit participation and enjoyment in leisure” (Jackson, 2000, p. 62). A focus on leisure constraints has been prominent within leisure research since the mid 1960s (Jackson & Scott, 1999). Outdoor recreation, sport tourism, and snowsports have received considerable attention within the leisure constraint literature providing a platform for the theoretical development of leisure constraints (e.g. Alexandris, Funk, & Pritchard, 2011; Alexandris, Kouthouris, & Girgolas, 2007; Gilbert & Hudson, 2000; Hinch, Jackson, Hudson, & Walker, 2005; Hudson, Hinch, Walker, & Simpson, 2010; Walker & Virden, 2005). Snowsports provide a unique environment where scholars have noted fundamental differences in the reporting of constraints (Gilbert & Hudson, 2000). Furthermore, the number of people engaging in snowsports is significant: in 2010-11 the Ski Club of Great Britain (2011) report over one million people in the UK taking a snowsports holiday abroad with approximately five million people considering themselves to be an alpine (downhill) skier or snowboarder. However, we find it surprising that such little work has taken a specific UK focus with most research displaying a distinctly North American influence. This contextualisation could result in the emergence of

unique and refreshing suggestions for the future of snowsport constraint research. This research draws on snowsport literature which includes all forms of skiing and snowboarding. The empirical work that is reported was conducted specifically in alpine (downhill) skiing.

This paper, therefore, aims to provide such a contribution through an investigation of the *experiences* and/or *perceptions* of constraints to snowsports from a selection of second year physical education students within a UK university. This population has been selected for two reasons. Firstly, participants “who are most likely to travel again in the future are single, aged 16-24 and in full time education. This group shows particular high propensity to go on a snowsports holiday in the future” (Mintel, 2010, p. 52); therefore, it is important to gain an understanding of what may be constraining this market segment. Secondly, these students are the teachers of the future, and through the organisation of school ski trips, it is teachers who can provide the opportunity for many young people to experience snowsports for the first time at an age that is crucial for the development of lifelong sport participation (Kirk, 2005). Thus, in this paper it is also relevant for us to detail literature concerning pre-service teachers.

Much research on snowsport behaviour continues to take a positivist methodological stance (e.g. Alexandris, Kouthouris, Funk, & Chatzigianni, 2008; Alexandris *et al.*, 2009; Alexan-

dris *et al.*, 2011; Kouthouris, Alexandris, Yovani, & Hatziyanni, 2005); however, this study aims to offer an understanding of how potential physical education teachers perceive and experience constraints – and the impact that this may have on their provision of such opportunities for school pupils in the future – through qualitative methods of enquiry, something that is crucial to enable an *understanding* of the experiences and perceptions that individuals have (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, we aim to provide a deeper understanding of such influences while allowing for any new, possibly overlooked, issues to emerge. We argue that in order for research in snowsports to progress in a multitude of theoretical directions, this inductive approach to constraint identification is essential.

Before proceeding, it is important to note that we are aware of the differing leisure research trends on either side of the Atlantic. While North American leisure *science* draws heavily on psychological theories with a more traditional grounding in positivist thinking (Samdahl, 1999) – with more recent calls for a post-positivist epistemology (Henderson, 2011) – the British leisure *studies* focus has been typically more sociological and tended toward critical theory and constructivist epistemologies (Samdahl, 1999). For example, Coalter (1997) described leisure science as analysing “leisure without society” (p. 258) and leisure studies as taking a “society in leisure” approach – i.e. considering leisure as a microcosm of broader social trends in a society – a view re-emphasised by Aitchison (2000). North American authors have argued, however, that these differences are presented as “false dichotomies” (e.g. Henderson, 2006). However, notwithstanding these ongoing debates, the relevance for the present study is that we have applied the arguably North American individualistic “constraints” approach of theorising to a UK research context and in doing so are striving to bridge these epistemological and methodological distinctions with the aim of providing a distinctive contribution to the understanding of snowsport participation.

Trainee teacher education

In this section we review literature on teacher education. This is important as the trainee teachers involved in this study will potentially be responsible for organising ski tourism in their future working lives, so understanding their motivation is important. In most Scottish and UK schools opportunities for skiing (and outdoor education more generally) are located in physical education (PE) departments so if future generations of teachers do not recognise the value of skiing then it is unlikely they will organise opportunities for their pupils.

Ennis and colleagues (1990; 1992; 1994) have commented extensively on the impact of PE teachers’ beliefs and values. Ennis asserts that values represent teachers’ belief systems about what and how they teach. The values that teachers develop become influential within an educational setting as they impact on teachers’ decisions to accept or reject knowledge as being useful to their practice (Ennis, 1994). Within the field of PE, there has been a plethora of anecdotal and empirical research around the beliefs and values of in-service teachers (Curtner-Smith, 2001; Curtner-Smith & Meek, 2000; Ennis & Hooper,

1988; Ennis, Mueller & Hooper, 1990; Ennis & Zhu, 1991; Ennis, 1992, 1994; Hodges Kulina, Silverman & Xiaofen, 2000; Liu & Silverman, 2006; MacDonald & Kirk, 1996; Tsangaridou & O’Sullivan, 2003). Generally speaking, the aforementioned studies on teachers’ beliefs and values report significant variations in the dispositions of in-service teachers and document the effect this has on their pedagogy and negotiation of the curriculum. However, research on pre-service PE teachers, their beliefs and values, and how these values are formulated or shaped is scant.

Only a few studies have investigated pre-service teachers’ beliefs and values from a PE perspective (Behets, 2001) and no studies have analysed this in a Scottish university context. Of significant importance in this snowsports study are the findings from Placek and Dodds (1988). They argue that teachers acquire beliefs and values about teaching PE from an early age and from a wide range of sources. The ‘socialisation’ of teachers includes time spent as a pupil in PE classes at school, informal sports interaction with peers, extra-curricular sport participation and community leadership/coaching opportunities. As a consequence of this on-going socialisation process, prospective PE teachers’ perceptions of pedagogy and curriculum theory may already be inculcated and entrenched before they enter a teacher education programme – with limited opportunity for changing these perceptions (Placek & Dodds, 1988).

Armour and Jones (1998) investigated the lives and careers of PE teachers to gain a deeper understanding of why people enter into the PE profession. They concluded that an interpretation of “life histories” assists with understanding the factors that influence pre-service and in-service PE teachers’ values and pedagogy. Essentially, understanding how pre-service teachers learn to teach and why in-service teachers favour particular approaches, is linked to ‘occupational socialisation’ (Lawson, 1986). In an extensive review of the occupational socialisation research, Wideen, Mayer-Smith and Moon (1998) have categorised the literature into three distinct areas: prior beliefs of beginning teachers (anticipatory socialisation); initial teacher education experience (pre-service socialisation); the first year of teaching (organisational socialisation).

Anticipatory socialisation in Physical Education

The anticipatory phase of socialisation has been investigated with interest in the PE literature. Most studies have been concerned with investigating why one enters the PE profession and what childhood experiences were influential in their decision to become a PE teacher (O’Bryant, O’Sullivan & Raudensky, 2000). The process of anticipatory socialisation starts from an early age and significantly influences prospective teachers even before they enter physical education teacher education (PETE) (Armour & Jones, 1998; Curtner-Smith, 2001; Hutchison, 1993). Unsurprisingly, an interest in PE, sport and physical activity pursuits are the initial influences (Armour & Jones, 1998; Lawson, 1983, 1986). A career in PE teaching provides an opportunity for an individual to continue their involvement within sport – an area of immense positive experiences for some (Dewar & Lawson, 1984; O’Bryant, O’Sullivan & Raudensky, 2000).

Significant others (such as family and friends) have been identified as having an instrumental influence in childhood sport participation for most PE teachers (Armour & Jones, 1998). In addition, demographics have some bearing on the likelihood of being physically active and the type of activities available during the childhood years (Green, 2000a; O'Bryant et al., 2000). A significant volume of literature agrees that sport participation is a key influence on prospective teachers to enter into the PE profession. However, PE teacher socialisation studies investigating sport participation and the effect of performing in a particular type of activity has on their teaching are scant.

Brown and Evans (2004) have investigated the "life histories" of undergraduate PE teachers and their findings detected key relationships with their PE teacher whilst a pupil at school. An 'apprenticeship of observation' (Green, 2000b, 2002; Lortie, 1975; Schempp, 1989) is undertaken during an individual's experiences of PE at school (Green, 2000a, 2000b) – whether this is as a performer or class helper with younger pupils in school. As a consequence, an individual forms their own understanding of effective and ineffective pedagogical approaches (Cosford, 2009; Curtner-Smith, 2001). Indeed, many prospective PE teachers enter the PETE programme with the belief that they have the necessary pedagogical skills and abilities to be a teacher, even before the pre-service socialisation phase (Cosford, 2009).

To further compound the problem, the sporting opportunities available within the community and extra-curricular setting also have an impact. Sporting opportunities across primary and secondary sectors have a "bias" toward team sports and only provide genuine extra-curricular possibilities for a minority of pupils (Green, 2000a). Such a narrow range of sporting experiences in tandem with high levels of competition in extra-curricular/community sport during the anticipatory stages has a powerful influence on prospective PE teachers' pedagogy (Curtner-Smith and Meek, 2000).

Pre-service socialisation in Physical Education

The pre-service socialisation of PE teachers is undertaken by the PETE programme. However, the effect of the anticipatory phase still reverberates through a student's PETE experience (Cosford, 2009). Evidence indicates that PETE experiences have limited influence on pre-service teachers due to the robust beliefs they form during the childhood and adolescence years when engaging with PE and community sport (Armour & Jones, 1998; Curtner-Smith, 1999; Placek et al, 1995; Goodlad, 1990).

However, Woods and Earls (1995) found that newly qualified PE teachers had retained the knowledge imparted during PETE and this was a direct result of their PETE programme. A study by Matanin and Collier (2003) partly agrees by confirming that PE students only incorporate particular knowledge from PETE to inform their understanding of the teaching profession. Knowledge regarding teacher effectiveness, curriculum content, and lesson planning was accepted, but information regarding classroom management techniques and the underlying aims and purposes of physical education were rejected. Matanin

and Collier used a variety of techniques to explore the beliefs and values of pre-service PE teachers throughout their PETE experience. They concluded that pre-service PE teachers rejected the knowledge provided on the philosophical aims and purposes of PE due to the impact of their anticipatory socialisation. To further reinforce this point, Lawson (1993) asserts that pre-service PE teachers place high value on the sports performance elements of the PETE programme. To illustrate, Armour and Jones (1998) reveal that, for some teachers, the decision to enter into PETE was simply to be involved in the sport performance elements of the course. During these sport sessions students have the opportunity to gain content knowledge by performing in various sporting activities and tend to accept these experiences more readily than any of the generic theoretical aspects of their course (Lawson, 1993).

It may be that the socialization process of the "hidden" curriculum also tacitly conveys messages to pre-service PE teachers regarding knowledge, attitudes, values and dispositions (Lempp & Seale, 2004). Specifically, Cosford (2009) argues that these messages have a profound influence on students' perspectives on teaching. This 'learning' percolates into a multitude of places such as the university library, the corridors of PE buildings, bars, sport settings, and in the halls of residence – the places where PETE lecturing staff are not in attendance. In fact, Lawson (1993) continues to add that PE students did not acknowledge research and literature to inform their understanding and beliefs of PE, but relied on discussions and interactions with their peers. Thus, during discussions with peers within the aforementioned social settings (outside of official classes), they are effectively engaging with a struggle to make and shape their understanding within the profession (Cosford, 2009).

Organisational socialisation in Physical Education

Organisational socialisation reports the impact of work settings during recurring school-based teaching placements and during the first year of teaching (Cosford, 2009). This process has been described effectively by the early work of Van Maanen and Schein (1979) as "...the process by which one is taught and learns the ropes of a particular organisational role" (p. 211).

This 'on-the-job' training is an important area of the PETE experience as students have the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills within a school context. It also plays a major role in the socialisation process of PE teachers as the culture of the school environment has a tendency to be reproduced (Webb et al, 2002). To illustrate, Schein (1988) explains that: "...assumptions and beliefs are shared...as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel..." (p. 6). In reality, the influence of the school culture is often so powerful that newly qualified and student teachers have difficulty implementing any of the curricular innovations learned during PETE (Curtner-Smith, 2001). Indeed, any mismatch between the school or PE department's culture and the curricular innovations advocated during PETE are likely to be 'washed out' (Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1981). As a consequence, the results of Cosford's (2009) study revealed that the school placement experiences of PETE appeared to reinforce the anticipatory beliefs of pre-service teachers' – com-

pleting the “vicious cycle” within the subject (Fernandez-Balboa & Muros, 2006).

The current study is focussing on pre-service teachers in the early stage of their PETE programme and before they have had the opportunity engage with their probationary teaching year. A general understanding of organisational socialisation is important as part of the overview of teachers’ socialisation. Additionally, organisational socialisation is helpful when considering the challenges facing PETE; it may be useful during follow-up studies with the current group of pre-service teachers after completing their probationary teaching year. However, this study will focus on the effects of anticipatory (experiences before PETE) and pre-service (experiences during PETE) socialisation.

Understanding constraint to leisure participation

Leisure constraints can be thought of as “factors that are assumed by researchers and/or perceived or experienced by individuals to limit the formation of leisure preferences and/or to inhibit or prohibit participation and enjoyment in leisure” (Jackson, 2000, p. 62). In trying to understand what shapes teachers’ advocacy of certain sporting or leisure activities, and their future promotion of such activities through their pedagogic behaviours, we have taken an individualistic social-psychological approach to understanding leisure behaviour.

Critical to such an approach is theoretical understanding put forward in earlier papers within the leisure constraint field. When viewed as a development of a core model, theorising provides the basis of what Godbey et al. (2010) have more recently denoted as “a theory of hierarchical leisure constraints” (p. 111). The initial model, as presented by Crawford and Godbey (1987), argued that constraints affect leisure preferences as well as participation. Crawford and Godbey categorised leisure constraints into: *intrapersonal constraints*, psychological qualities that affect leisure preferences; *interpersonal constraints*, social factors that affect leisure preferences; and finally, *structural constraints*, that occur after preferences have been made but before participation. Crawford, Jackson, and Godbey (1991) developed this further by arguing that these constraint categories are sequentially hierarchical in nature, with intrapersonal constraints being the most proximal and structural the most distal.

A further development of understanding leisure constraints was the idea of constraint negotiation. Scott (1991) explained how individuals make efforts to negotiate leisure constraints. Building on the work of Scott (1991), Jackson, Crawford, and Godbey (1993) proposed the “negotiation thesis”. This illus-

trates the different stages that each constraint influences either preferences or participation and how people find ways to negotiate such constraint, even if the participation that results differs from unconstrained participation. These theoretical developments have provided a conceptual way of reviewing leisure constraints and their implications, and from this theoretical platform a significant body of research has emerged (Godbey et al., 2010).

Outdoor recreation

Constraints to outdoor recreation received a large amount of attention throughout the development of leisure constraint research (e.g. Culp, 1998; Jackson, 1994; McGuire, OLeary, Alexander, & Dottavio, 1987). However, since the turn of the century there has been significant theoretical development that has directly influenced research conducted on constraints to snowsports (e.g. Walker & Virden, 2005). Walker and Virden’s model expanded hierarchical leisure constraint theory through emphasising the complexity of the hierarchical nature. This work can be applied to not just outdoor recreation, but also participation in more general forms of leisure (see Fig 1). The left hand side of this model is based on the argument that an individual’s leisure preferences are affected by motivations, intrapersonal constraints, and interpersonal constraints. Similarly, socio-economic, socio-cultural, and socio-structural issues affect leisure preferences in direct and indirect ways through motivations and intra/interpersonal constraints. The right hand side of this model is based on an assertion that interpersonal constraints and structural constraints intervene between an individual’s leisure preferences and their actual leisure participation. This therefore means that constraint negotiation is seen as a two-part process, taking place at the decision making stage, and again when structural constraints come into play. The final part of this model is the stage of post-participation evaluation; this gives the individual an opportunity to reflect on the constraints they have encountered, and the success or failure of the negotiation strategies employed. It is also important to understand that underpinning this entire model is the fact that participation in outdoor recreation involves interaction with the environment; therefore, an individual’s participation is influenced by personal *experience* and *perception* (Walker & Virden, 2005). This highlights the potential value of qualitative data in the contribution to an understanding of such perception and experience.

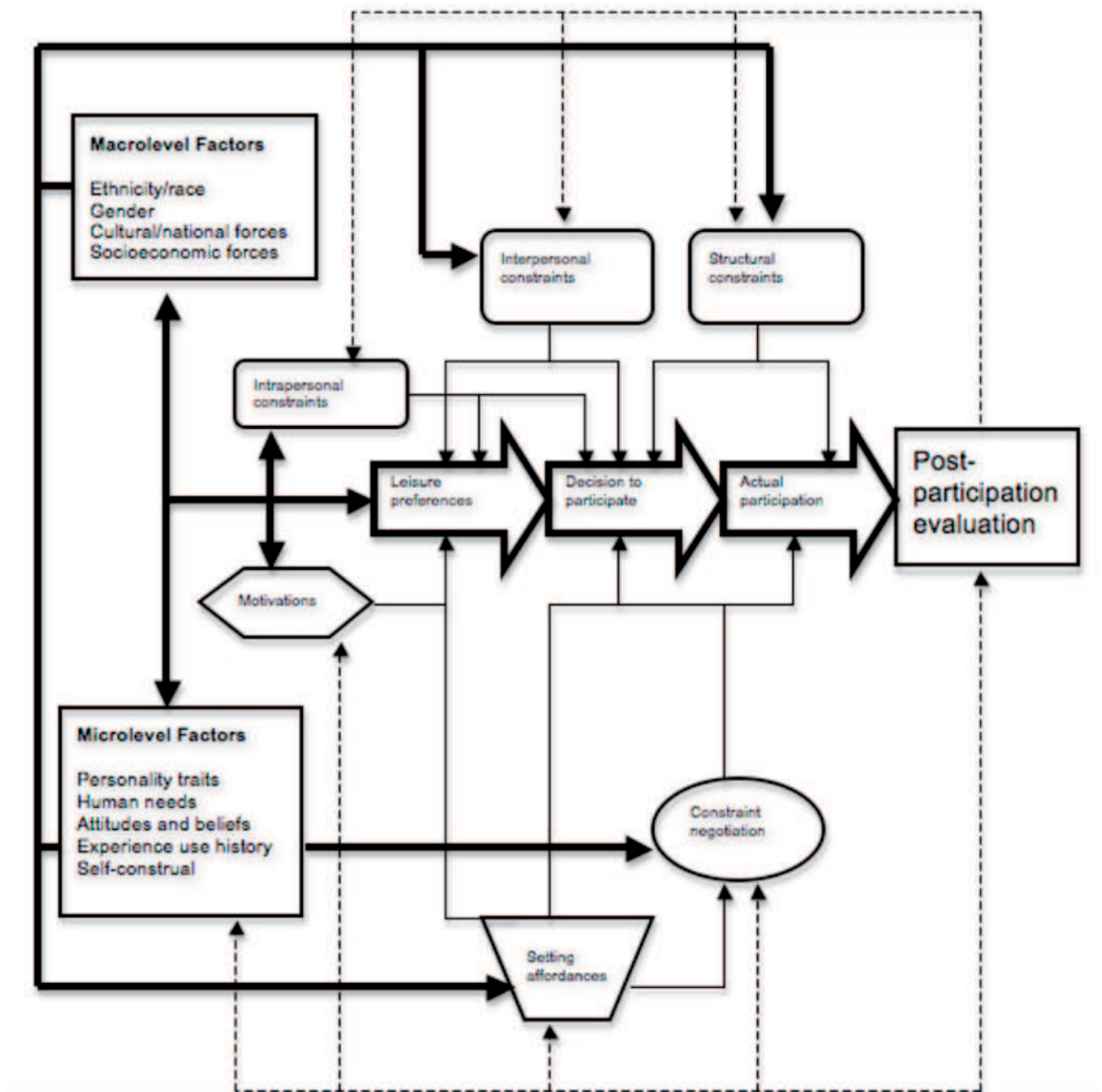


Fig. 1. The Revised Leisure Constraints Model.

Source: Walker, J. G. & Virden, R. J. (2005). Constraints on outdoor recreation. In E. L. Jackson, *Constraints to leisure*. Venture Publishing: College Press, PA.

More recent developments have emphasised the importance of motivation in the negotiation of constraints (White, 2008). White's study is characteristic of the North American social psychological approach to leisure research (Kleiber, Walker, & Mannell, 2011); therefore, there is dominant emphasis placed upon influences such as motivation and constraint negotiation. This trend can be further seen across the snowsport constraint literature (Alexandris et al., 2011; Alexandris et al., 2008; Alexandris et al., 2009; Kouthouris, 2009). Such analyses are well received when one considers the need to not only gain an understanding of constraining influences, but also complementary facilitating influences (Raymore, 2002). However, the inadver-

tent effect upon much snowsport constraint research has been the continued use of quantitative methods of data collection and analysis. The use of qualitative methods of enquiry has proved useful within leisure constraint research on the European side of the Atlantic (Emira & Thompson, 2011).

Snowsport constraints

Previous research on constraints to participation in snowsports has tended to segment the downhill skiing market through identifying likely participants (often due to social/economic status) particularly those who fall into the 'latent demand'

category (Williams & Basford, 1992; Williams & Fidgeon, 2000). These two similar studies found that perceived danger and costs were the two major deterring factors for non-participants:

...skiing conjured up images of injury, pain, accidents, and risk amongst non-skiers. Respondents were afraid that if they were to ski, personal physical injury would probably result. Their fear related to several dimensions of the ski experience, including its location (e.g., on steep and high mountain slopes), learning to ski (e.g., poor instruction leading to injury), manoeuvring on the slopes (e.g., going too fast, out of control), and using the lift facilities (e.g., mounting and dismounting from the lifts, falling off ski lifts at great heights).

(Williams & Fidgeon, 2000, p. 383)

These perceptions were constructed from the experiences of family, friends, and their acquaintances, as well as through the media and other personal experiences. The respondents' general picture of skiing was that "it was a treacherous activity not to be attempted without considerable preparation and thought" (Williams & Basford, 1992, p. 227). The respondents of both studies identified a number of personal constraints (ability, income, commitments), activity-based constraints (danger, skill requirements, and risk), as well as industry-based constraints (communication, crowding, poor service levels, difficulty in obtaining equipment). However, the authors stated that if these constraints were alleviated or removed, then the chances that respondents would participate would dramatically increase. The authors argued that in order for the industry to transform latent into effective demand it is important to fully understand these constraining factors and the different perceptions of skiing that the non-participant can have.

This focus has resulted in the introduction of social psychological analyses of snowsport constraint. Hinch et al. (2005) have applied Walker and Virden's (2005) model to the sport tourism area through the example of downhill skiing; this is justified due to skiing being "one of the major sport tourism activities and is responsible for major international and domestic travel flows throughout much of Europe and North America" (Hinch et al. p. 156). It is clear, therefore, that snowsports share a common theoretical background with outdoor recreation and these research areas have often been linked through similar theorising.

Within the snowsport constraint literature there has also been a minimal focus upon issues that could be classed as interpersonal constraints. Gilbert and Hudson (2000) display this through stating that in the context of skiing, interpersonal constraints were either experienced at the same time as structural constraints or they did not exist at all, therefore rejecting the hierarchical model originally put forward by Crawford et al. (1991). Gilbert and Hudson created a model of skiing leisure constraints (see Fig 2); the main findings constituted that for many participants (as well as being an issue for the non-skier) financially based constraints were of prime concern. The authors emphasised the need for the industry to, rather than play down the cost, stress value for money. When looking at the non-skier, the main issue was individual preconceptions; Gil-

bert and Hudson, therefore, emphasise the promotion of such activities as enjoyable and safe.

Within the last decade snowsport constraints literature has adopted a motivational focus – similar to the outdoor recreation area – in which the examination of participant motivations allows for market segmentation (Alexandris et al., 2009; Kouthouris, 2009). This focus has revealed that there are many interpersonal and socialisation motivations for participation in winter sports such as spending time with family and friends, meeting new people, and seeing new faces and observing others (Alexandris et al., 2009). However, although there is an appreciation of the importance of interpersonal issues in the motivational stage of participation, there is still little acknowledgement of these issues as constraining participation. Further research has also investigated the relationship between motivation and constraint negotiation (Alexandris et al., 2007) and also relationships between constraints, motivation, loyalty, and continuity of participation (Alexandris et al., 2011; 2008).

We aim to not only provide a contribution to the snowsport constraint literature, but also to provide insight into a valuable market segment that is emphasised within recent market research (Intel, 2010, p. 52). Furthermore, Physical Education students have been selected for this study because within the UK, teachers provide a vital opportunity for pupils to not only experience the mountain and snowsport environment through the provision of school trips, but also act as ambassadors of the sport to individuals who may not have come across such an experience through other means.

Methodology

This study is concerned with the *experienced* or *perceived* constraints to participation in snowsports. It is important to clarify that these are on an individual basis, and therefore this study is not aiming to identify a strict set of 'true constraints' but rather to identify constraints from the perspective of the respondents and the *meaning* that they attribute to their *experiences* or *perceptions*. This study therefore, took on an interpretive research paradigm involving the use of a qualitative methodology to enable an understanding of how people make sense of their experiences (Edwards & Skinner, 2009).

To uncover and develop information from the respondents' perspective semi-structured interviews were used. Pilot interviews were conducted to test the interview schedule, which helped to guide the interviews and ensured that there was a routine to collecting the relevant information from each respondent. These efforts contributed to ensuring a trustworthy study. Trustworthiness involves credibility, transferability, dependability and quality of testimony (Lincoln & Guba, 1988) – all areas which have been addressed in this study but space does not permit detailed explication.

The sample for this study comprised 36, second year undergraduate PE students enrolled at a UK university. Participants were grouped according to sex, and then each sex group was further divided into participants and non-participants. Eight interviews were conducted in this study allowing for an equal number of sexes to be selected in order to gain an understanding of

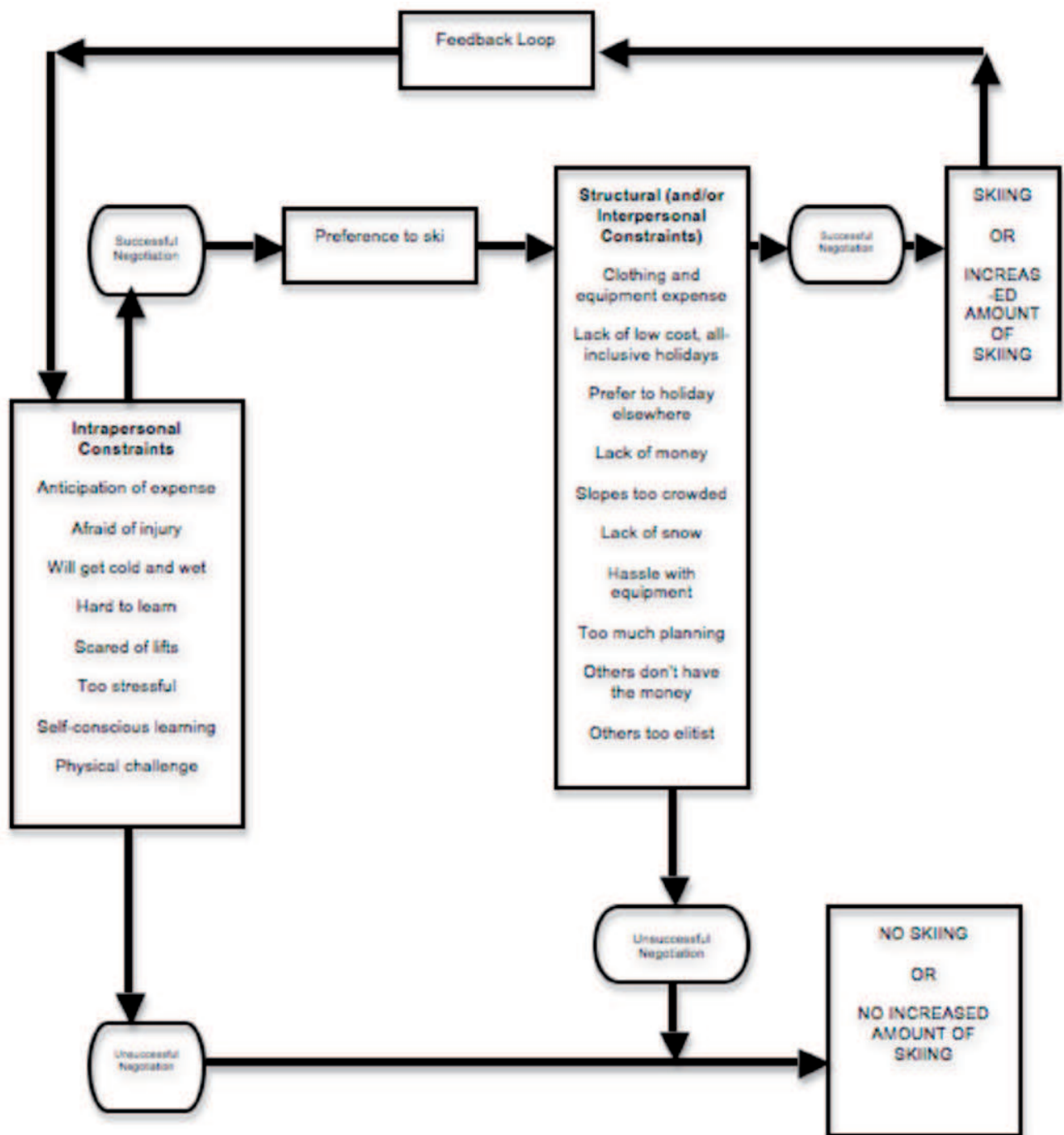


Fig. 2. A New Model of Leisure Constraints (Pertaining to Skiing),

Source: Gilbert, D. & Hudson, S. (2000). Tourism Demand Constraints, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(4), 906-925.

constraints from both the participant and the non-participant. Due to time limitations, eight interviews were feasible as well as adequate for the purposes of the study, as Silverman (2010) explains: "often the best research says a lot about a little" (Silverman, 2010, p. 135). Groups were systematically sampled and prospective interviewees were contacted by email and invited to participate in digitally recorded interviews.

Although the transcription of interviews is a popular practice, for this study interviews were not transcribed. Not only is this a lengthy process, using up time when 'coming to terms'

with the data could be done, there are also questions as to whether the transcriptions of interviews are reliable, valid, and ethical (Kvale, 2007; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Analysis for this research was performed directly from files; there were three broad deductive codes (from the literature review) for this analysis stage—Intrapersonal, Structural and Interpersonal. Interviews were listened to and the quotes categorised into these codes. A number of *dominant* sub-codes (that had 3 or more relevant quotes) were identified; some of these were deductive – originating from the snowsport constraint theory used to

form the interview schedule, or inductive, emerging from the participants themselves. "Coder reliability checking" (Richards, 2009, p. 150) was also conducted and confirmed a high level of consistency.

Results and discussion

Intrapersonal

The perception of danger, specifically that of injury, was a prominent intrapersonal issue throughout the snowsport constraint literature (Gilbert & Hudson, 2000; Michailidis et al., 2006; Williams & Basford, 1992; Williams & Fidgeon, 2000). This was therefore an issue that was pursued within the interviews. The responses to this area of questioning supported that of previous authors who found that "skiing conjured up images of injury, pain, accidents and risk amongst non-skiers" (Williams & Fidgeon, 2000, p. 383). For example:

You hear of friends going skiing and somebody breaks an arm or something, breaks a leg, and I think erm, there is a stigma with snowsports of if you fall, you're gunna get hurt. [emphasis added]

The issue of "stigma" created by the experiences, or stories, of others highlights a possible merger of intrapersonal with interpersonal constraints. However, it is also evident that our own individual experiences can contribute to a sense of fear about injury, even if the experience is only of a similar sport. Therefore, a lack of knowledge regarding such experiences could contribute to the creation of a 'misconception'.

A fear of heights and anxieties created by the thought of using the lifts were present within these data. Firstly, two of the respondents recalled stories concerning fear of lifts, or anxieties while using them; also a number of respondents referred to being up high as a daunting prospect. This supports the previous literature indicating that intrapersonal issues can result from anxiety of these two aspects of the snowsport experience (Gilbert & Hudson, 2000; Michailidis et al., 2006; Williams & Basford, 1992; Williams & Fidgeon, 2000). For example:

A few of the guys in the group when I went weren't too keen on the higher, longer lifts, but getting off the lifts is a bit of an issue too. I remember getting stuck underneath one once, that was quite funny [laughs], but erm, and then obviously when you're first attempting the next like stage of run, and it's quite steep, then that's quite a scary prospect. [emphasis added]

A number of interviewees identified issues concerning the weather. This was identified by Gilbert and Hudson (2000) as being an intrapersonal constraint, and this study supports this. However, Gilbert and Hudson (2000) categorised this constraint as being "Will get cold and wet" (p. 914), yet this research was only able to identify anxieties relating to the former. Although it is clear that the anticipation of the cold weather is a 'put off' for some of the respondents, there is evidence that this would not necessarily constrain their participation. Furthermore, it is clear that an increased amount of information

about how to prepare for the cold will aid in the reduction of anxiety concerning this issue.

The issue concerning personal embarrassment is raised in a number of previous studies (Gilbert & Hudson, 2000; Michailidis et al., 2006; Williams & Basford, 1992; Williams & Fidgeon, 2000). Interviewees referred to an anxiety of not being good at something in front of their friends. However, one of the interviewees related their anxiety of embarrassment to people they did not know rather than friends. For example:

If you're in a group with people you don't know and you're not picking it up quite as quickly as other people, erm then you can sort of develop a downward spiral and not pick it up at all, because I can see you getting embarrassed and not like trying anymore. [emphasis added]

This sense of embarrassment seemed to be accentuated when the individual is outside an environment where they have the same ability as the others around them. This applies to not only beginners, but also 'advanced skiers' being categorised higher ability than they actually are. Therefore, it is important that levels of embarrassment are kept as low as possible, and this could be achieved through ensuring that care is taken in allocating ability level groups and maintaining flexibility to change groups without drawing attention or creating embarrassment for individuals.

Structural

Financial constraints have been identified as major issues for both the participant, and the non-participant (Gilbert & Hudson, 2000; Michailidis et al., 2006; Williams & Basford, 1992; Williams & Fidgeon, 2000). In this study, the high costs were attributed to a number of elements of the skiing experience, from accommodation and equipment, to lift passes and lessons. Both participants and non-participants acknowledged the idea of skiing being an expensive activity, however there was evidence that the cost element of participation can be negotiated. Cost was an issue for a number of respondents, including the 'additional costs' of equipment. However, for non-participants there is often a lack of knowledge about how much it will *actually* cost. Therefore, the industry could better communicate actual costs to the non-participant. There is also a need to look at the marketing of lower cost alternatives, or an emphasis needs to be placed upon value for money, and a worthwhile emotional benefit (Gilbert & Hudson, 2000). It is clear that cost is negotiable, therefore marketers need to focus on elements of these negotiation strategies to alleviate economic constraints.

Williams and Basford (1992) and Williams and Fidgeon (2000) found that an all-inclusive package holiday would entice the respondents of their studies to take up snowsports. Further to this Gilbert and Hudson (2000) identified that a lack of these packages was a specific structural constraint, to both participants, and non-participants. Therefore, this issue was pursued within the interviews, and although there is evidence that this is still a constraining issue in other countries, such as Greece (Michailidis et al., 2006), the authors did not expect this to be dominant within the findings of this study, especially when we look at recent snowsport industry analysis for the United

Kingdom (Ski Club of Great Britain, 2011). However, a number of interviewees mentioned that they had not noticed any advertisement or marketing efforts by tour operators or travel agents. This was mostly the case for non-participants.

For example:

I honestly don't think that they have been marketed very well at all and erm I mean you see holidays for like different places but not so much for ski resorts, but I think if there was more then you would notice and you'd be more likely, you know if you see an ad on the TV then your more likely to try it out.

I haven't really like been anywhere and been like 'oh skiing holidays advertised here', they probably are more in the winter time but not really, like I've only ever heard from like my other family members that they were going skiing, I've never really seen any adverts on TV and that. [emphasis added]

An interesting issue to emerge from the data was the fact that the only interviewees to mention a lack of marketing or advertisement were female. This could be representative of the marketing and advertising efforts that have been made, and that too much emphasis has been placed on the 'young male' market segment. This issue requires further research, but even if this is not the case, it is clear that more of an effort needs to be made at attracting younger clients within fulltime education (Mintel, 2010).

Interviewees were asked if they thought there was enough information available for people wanting to take up snowsports. Some referred to how their training has been absent of any input from the governing body; this is an interesting inductive issue because the role the teacher plays could affect the preferences created by individuals at a younger age.

For example:

Well we have professional learning weeks where we do extra-curricular things and we always get like badminton Scotland and LTA and stuff like that giving us three hour coaching sessions, and sort of expanding our knowledge of different sports which is really useful for us, and I've not seen a snowsport one ever, like even if it was a lecture about it or something, I've just never seen it happen.

You have rugby players coming into schools, you could have skiers going into schools and stuff, saying to people 'this is why you should ski' and giving them ways of learning. [emphasis added]

Interpersonal

Interestingly, the snowsport constraint literature does not place a great deal of importance on interpersonal issues. Gilbert and Hudson (2000) argued that interpersonal constraints either do not exist, or are experienced at the same time as structural constraints, meaning that they affected actual participation, rather than participation preferences. Although there is evidence of this, we believe that more attention needs to be given to a number of interpersonal issues especially in relation to preference formation.

The influence that parents and family have on the preferences to participate in certain sports is an under-represented issue within the literature. Although we can see some support, Gilbert and Hudson's (2000) argument that this interpersonal issue affects actual participation (i.e. if the parents don't offer it then the individual cannot participate), it is clear that the influence of parents and family could also impact upon an individual's leisure preferences. For example:

I think particularly with parents with skiing is probably the biggest factor to you picking it up, erm because media coverage of skiing and stuff is not as big as your football and all that, so erm I think it's definitely mainly the parents' influence people getting into skiing to start with.

I think if my family had never skied then I wouldn't have, pfft, no I don't think I would have.

If they'd [parents] been into skiing and they'd been like 'right we're going on a skiing holiday this year, then I probably would have learnt it, but it works each way because my sport is badminton, and my mum and dad play badminton, so that's why I play it, so it's like they don't ski, so I don't ski, I don't get the opportunity to do it.

My dad is a basketball player, and I play a lot of basketball, and erm running and stuff, my mum kinda likes to keep fit and different things like that, just not skiing. [emphasis added]

The evidence suggests that the role parents can play in the introduction to snowsports throughout an individual's early life is crucial, though not essential, for the development of a preference to participate in the future.

Many individuals get (or don't get) an opportunity to take up snowsports through an organised school trip. This could be classed as a structural constraint, however, this study has found that crucial to the uptake of these opportunities could be the role that the teacher plays, in not only the foundation of an opportunity, but also the enthusiasm they show, and the impact that this could have upon the creation of a preference to experience snowsports.

For example:

The PE department wasn't very extra-curricular in any way, the teachers involved, like one of them was quite old and knew what he was doing on the job but didn't wanna really commit to extra work outside of hours, so he would do maybe a football club every so often but not a lot, and both the teachers certainly wouldn't wanna conduct a trip where you take sixty kids abroad or even within Britain.

There was a new PE teacher that came in when I was in fourth year and ran a trip for third years, so I just missed it. I think he was quite into skiing and things so decided to run one.

I think if teachers promoted it more and been like 'yeh this is a really good experience, you get to do this and that, and it's really good', then I think more kids woulda been, erm, probably more confident of themselves as well to sign up to it, because obviously a big thing about the ski trips would be that it's not really highlighted that there are different

levels of groups going. [emphasis added]

We clearly see that the teacher plays an important role in the organisation of such trips, and although an opportunity may exist, it is also important that the individual teacher works to emphasise the positive elements of the experience, so as to integrate a range of individuals. It is also important for this specific study because it can be these experiences that encourage these future teachers to run trips, for example:

In college I got to get involved in loadsa other stuff like Duke of Edinburgh and Skiing and stuff like that and I really enjoyed it, so from my point of view if I go into a school now I don't wanna deprive kids of the opportunity to do that, it needs to be offered as an opportunity to the kids. [emphasis added]

A number of interviewees referred to situations in which their social group has influenced their participation. This does, to some extent, agree with Gilbert and Hudson's (2000) identification of "lack of participation partner" (p. 914) as an interpersonal constraint. However, the interviewees in this study highlighted the social pressure of wanting to do something that your friends don't do, especially at school, where social pressures may be more influential. Another issue that was raised by the interviewees was the fact that the lack of opportunity at school could have affected their social group's activities now; this could be seen as a link of the development of an interpersonal constraint with a structural issue, in support of Gilbert and Hudson (2000). For example:

I never ever went, not just because of the time, but also because none of my friends were going and I didn't really want to go with other people.

I used to want to go all the time on a Wednesday but there was only one other guy that I knew who skied and then I kinda fell out with him and I never went again, erm so yeh, I think that there was not enough people that I knew, but then again if my school had had school trips to go skiing then my mates mighta been able to ski, and then I'd have been able to go with them.

If friends from school that, erm like I'm friends with now outside university... if they were like 'do you wanna go on a ski trip?' then I'd probably be like 'yeh' because they would be like beginners too, so it would be a good laugh but erm, they aren't into that.

Particularly at school you are more sort of affected by peer pressure, and if none of your friends ski, then they could start questioning why you ski. [emphasis added]

These examples clearly demonstrate the influence that friends, and the social group in which an individual is situated, can impact upon on their participation. This is a difficult issue to address, however as identified above, the opportunity for friends to take part in a school trip could introduce whole groups of people to the sport at an age where leisure habits can be formed.

Conclusions

We have identified insights into a number of issues that were evident within the *experiences* and *perceptions* of snowsport constraints by the selected interviewees. It goes beyond this research to make any generalisations about the wider population, and any recommendations that have been made thus far are based on these specific examples. There were a number of issues that have received a large amount of attention within the literature, yet were not identified within this study. Although this does not question the existence, or intensity, of such issues within the twenty-first century snowsports market, it would be interesting to further research such possibilities. A number of prevalent issues within the literature such as 'time', 'hassle' 'anticipation of expense' (and more) received little or no response within the interviews conducted for this study.

There were a number of interesting emergent issues. Market analysis shows that the usual way of a booking a snowsports holiday is as an all-inclusive package (Mintel, 2010; Ski Club of Great Britain, 2011), and a number of tour operators have been investing in the marketing of such products, through channels such as social media (Mintel, 2010). Therefore, we were surprised to find that these individuals had little or no exposure to such marketing strategies. However, interestingly the only interviewees to voice such opinions were female, and this could show that marketing campaigns have been aimed at the male market. This is something that needs further investigation. The role that the governing body plays in the encouragement of the sport is another issue that produced interesting conversation. It is clear that from the perspective of this sample, relevant agencies need to do more to encourage non-participants to take up the sport, one channel through which this could be possible is the promotion of the value of the sport to future (PE) teachers and maybe parents / families who often finance such experiences.

We believe this research justifies further examination of the role of interpersonal constraints to snowsports. Although generalisations cannot be made from these findings, there is certainly a need to further research such issues. It is clear that the introduction to snowsports can heavily rely upon a number of structural issues that influence the provision of relevant opportunities. However, important to the up-take of such opportunities in younger life can be the role of parents, teachers and friends. We argue that even if opportunities are provided, in order for participation to extend into later life a preference must be embedded within an individual, and this cannot be done purely through exposure to relevant opportunities. Further work in this area has potential to significantly influence uptake of snowsports as a long term hobby and the associated benefits on health and well-being.

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